- Agreement has been signed by USOF with BSNL for provision of Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) 'on demand' in 88 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs). These would be available in the first quarter of the year 2006.
- A sum of Rs. 22.27 crore has been disbursed so far towards providing financial assistance for MARR replacement and capital cost/operations/maintenance of rural public telephones in Chhattisgarh Telecom circle.

New Telecom Policy

2455. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new Telecom Policy is on the anvil;

(b) whether it is proposed to clip the wings or curtail the powers of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India by transferring certain function to Department of Communications; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) At present there is no proposal under consideration to redefine powers and functions of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India by amending Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

Depth of towers

2456. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether depth of the towers for receiving the network without any disturbances are as per the norms in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to take action against the erring companies; and